

PERSPECTIVES

A publication of the Mass. Department of Mental Health
Office of Communications & Consumer Affairs

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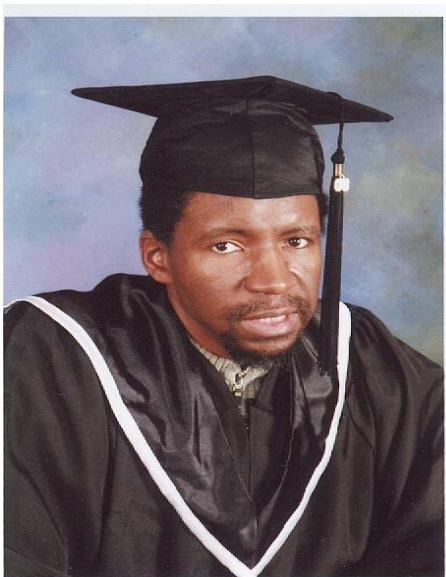
Education: The Road to Opportunity

Center Club focus is education

By Doug Kull

Center Club will soon be celebrating its 50th anniversary so it's not surprising that the club has developed a distinct culture. One of the central elements of this culture is a high regard for education that is rooted in the deep and universal interest of Center

(continued on page 2)



Andre Suber, a member of Center Club in Boston, earned a Certificate in Office Technology from Roxbury Community College on June 6, 2008.

Photo courtesy of Center Club

Welcome to

PERSPECTIVES

This issue of Perspectives features educational programs that help mental health clients reach their fullest potential. DMH Commissioner Barbara Leadholm has emphasized her commitment to achieving Governor Patrick's goal of promoting educational opportunities. From Services for Education and Employment (SEE), to Clubhouse education units, to state-operated supported education programs, read about how DMH funds and supports education as a means of development and advancement for mental health consumers.

Steve Holochuck

Editor & Director of Consumer Affairs

**For an educational
resource contact in your
local DMH Area,
see page 6**

Recovery and Resiliency Through Partnership

(continued from page 1)

Club members in learning and growth.

The club strives to cultivate this interest by creating an atmosphere that encourages and supports members who want to study. The real backbone of the club's educational supports has been the assistance members have given one another in pursuing their education: whether tutoring other members, sharing information about schools or GED programs, helping members find funding sources or simply encouraging members who are studying.

Currently there are four club members and one community volunteer who work with club members on basic math or reading, basic computer skills and English as a second language. There are also club members who tutor fellow club members taking college courses. During the year, more than 60 club members work with the Center Club tutors.

Members have been enrolled in programs or at colleges in the area: in a certificate program for substance abuse counseling at U Mass Boston; in a certificate program in Refrigeration, Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (RHVAC) at RETS Technical Center; in a bachelor's degree program in art



Education has been a way to improve myself and my mental health.

—John

Learning to use the computer shows that I am very smart and that I'm relentless and that I persevere in learning. Learning gives me self-confidence and makes me feel productive - especially when I teach other members to use the computer.

— Brenda

at Salem State College; in online degree programs at Kaplan University; and psychology courses at Northeastern. This past June, two members graduated from the Certificates with Specification program at Roxbury Community College. Four members are enrolled in courses at the Boston University's Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation. Club members often study in the CASCAP Consumer Provider Program to become qualified to work in mental health rehabilitation programs. Two members graduated from this program in June.

What is striking about Center Club members' efforts to take courses and to complete certificates and degrees is not only the widespread interest in doing this, but the persistence and courage of members to do this in spite of the obstacles that invariably arise as a result of their disability.

Paying for education is one of the obstacles club members face. Center Club has a small fund that can help members take one or two courses at a community college. But some members have been able to get funding for education from Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). This past year three members received federal Pell Grants.

Over 100 club members receive some type of educational support from the club each year. As always, Center Club continues to stay on top of new tools to help members recognize and reach their educational goals. We hope to continue this trend and promote our clubhouse as a positive learning environment for another 50 years to come.

Doug Kull is Assistant Program Director of Center Club in Boston. Center Club is a member of the Massachusetts Clubhouse Coalition.

***SEE* What's Up at Riverside Career Services**

By Marjorie Longo & Amy Long

Riverside Career Services is a comprehensive career placement program designed to meet the needs of adults and adolescents age 16 or older whose education or careers have been interrupted by mental health problems.

This is one of 25 Services for Education and Employment (SEE) programs funded by the Department of Mental Health. We were founded on the belief that people with mental illness can and do recover, work, and go to school.

By accepting challenges, our participants further their own recovery and have the opportunity to develop a meaningful career path. We value and support an individual's goals and dreams and encourage participants to become leaders in their own career exploration.

Riverside Career Services offers pre-employment and educational needs assessment, evaluation and counseling along with individual education and career planning. Riverside Career Services helps individuals access colleges and job training programs, links individuals with employers and provides flexible, personalized and ongoing support.

*Marjorie Longo and Amy Long work for
Riverside Career Services in Melrose.*

**DMH Information & Referral
Line**

1-800-221-0053

Toll-free in Massachusetts

Supported Education Works!

By Karl Speth

In September, I will be taking my final class at UMass Boston. When I am done with that class—probability—I will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Computer Science. I have been attending classes at UMass since the fall of 2003. Prior to that, I attended Bunker Hill



Community College where I majored in Computer Technology. At Bunker Hill, some of the classes I took were JavaScript, HTML, Flash, and CSS. I decided to switch to UMass Boston because I wanted to challenge myself.

The people who have helped me along the way are Stacey Foskett of the Ross Center (disability services) at UMass Boston, my friend Scott who tutored me, and Stephanie, another tutor.

Boris Lazic and Joanne Sullivan, Education Specialists at Riverside Career Services in Melrose, also helped by visiting me on campus and meeting with me weekly at Riverside Career Services in Melrose, for help with papers, organization, scheduling, support—whatever I needed.

In particular, my organizational skills have improved greatly since I first began working with Riverside in January of 2005. I have been in school for eight years and am really looking forward to completing my requirements in December of this year.

When I get my degree I hope to be gainfully employed in the competitive field of Computer Programming, Software Engineering, and/or Quality Assurance.

*Karl Speth is a student at UMass/Boston who receives
services for supported education.*

A Worthy CAUSE

by Semaja Howard

The agency where I work attended a symposium on June 27, 2008. We decided to use a Venn diagram* for our poster board. Our agency developed survey instruments. I wrote the research paper. We illustrated how peers evaluated the Recovery Learning Community. My master's degree in applied sociology proved to be an invaluable tool for this research project.

My graduate degree was instrumental in obtaining my previous position as a district court advocate. I worked beside prosecutors, defense attorneys and judges to determine the course of action for survivors of domestic violence. The atmosphere of the courts intimidated our clients. I created a bridge between clients and members of the court. I gained respect from the court. More importantly I was making a difference in the lives of others.

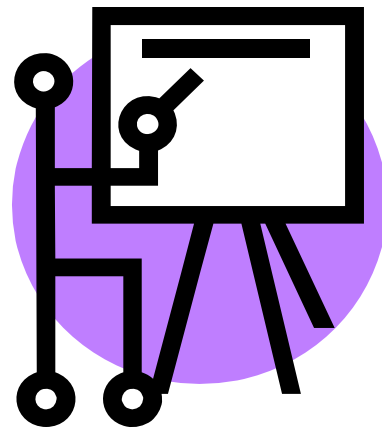
These jobs would not have been possible if it were not for Consumers and Alliances United for Supported Edu-

cation (CAUSE). It was 1994. In my catastrophic state of mental health, I was assigned to a CAUSE advocate. My educational journey got underway.

My advocate took me to visit colleges. She believed in me. She helped me fill out an application to a community college. I found a psychiatrist. I had different mental health conditions. I took medications. Progressing in college, I was encouraged me to attend the university. Transferring, I began to navigate university life. "Student" became a part of my identity. I went on to earn my master's degree.

I stand in front of a poster board and explain the research paper. A woman approaches me. I begin to explain our research. It is the woman who helped me to unlock my potential as a student. It had come full circle—it was my advocate from CAUSE.

*Venn diagrams (or set diagrams) are [illustrations](#) used in the branch of [mathematics](#) known as [set theory](#).



**Semaja Howard works at an agency in the
Metro Suburban Area**

Recovery Learning Communities: *Your resource for consumer-run networks of self help/peer support, information and referral, advocacy and recovery training activities. Contact your local RLC today!*

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Worcester, MA 01603
(508) 751-9600
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centralmassrlc@yahoo.com

Metro Boston RLC
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North East RLC
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CAUSE

By Kim Anderson and Virginia Wentworth

CAUSE (Consumers and Alliances United for Supported Education) is a unique collaboration with the Department of Mental Health, the National Alliance for Mental Illness-Mass., educational institutions, vocational agencies and mental health agencies in the DMH Metro Suburban Area.

CAUSE assists individuals with psychiatric disabilities in achieving their educational goals. It provides assistance with selecting the school of their choice, assistance with admissions requirements, assistance with financial aid and seeking other funding, problem solving, advocacy and information and referral.

The program has been successful in helping consumers attend college, obtain GEDs, attend ESL programs, find job training opportunities or take adult education courses. More than 100 students attend school per year with more than an 80 percent success rate. Since 1991, CAUSE has served 1,649 consumers and 82 have graduated from college and technical schools.

The CAUSE program is supported by five staff and two volunteers. Three of the staff and two volunteers are consumers. Additionally, a citizen Executive Board meets with staff each month during the academic year at Quincy Mental Health Center, where the CAUSE Program is located. CAUSE is committed to consumers' recovery.

CAUSE is located at the Quincy Mental Health Center. Kim Anderson is Program Director and Virginia Wentworth is a Supported Learning Specialist.



In Brief....



Jo Bower greets conference goers at the 25 Annual **No Surrender! Conference** which drew over two hundred consumer/survivors in the Northeast Area.

Congratulations to **Howard Trachtman** on his receiving the NAMI Consumer Council Ken Steele Award at the nationwide annual conference of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) in Orlando, FL.

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**Matt McWade** is the new Statewide Youth Coordinator. He has a new educational video on youth speaking out on their experience of mental illness and against stigma on YouTube. He can be reached at 877-769-7693, Ext. 307 (toll free in MA, outside of MA @ 617-442-4111, Ext. 307 ). His e-mail is [mmcwade@transformation-center.org](mailto:mmcwade@transformation-center.org).

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The **Recovery Learning Community of Western Mass.** gathered recently for the a program celebrating its first birthday. **Commissioner Barbara Leadholm** addressed about 100 attendees. The program included music, speakers, poetry, and refreshments. The RLC presented **Steve Holochuck**, Director of Consumer Affairs, with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

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**Tunefoolery** Concert Ensembles is seeking talented musicians who are mental health consumers to join their organization. For more information see [www.tunefoolery.org](http://www.tunefoolery.org) or call 617-910-8375.

# DMH Employment Coordinators and Educational Resource Contacts

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Metro Suburban DMH Area Office

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## NORTHEAST

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## WESTERN MASS

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# New Information Resources for People with Disabilities

*By Pamela Mason*

The New England INDEX has been the primary online information and referral resource for people with disabilities in Massachusetts for more than 20 years. Originally founded at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center in Waltham, INDEX is now affiliated with the Division of Commonwealth Medicine of the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Current major funding comes from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Department of Mental Retardation and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission.

INDEX maintains comprehensive information on disabilities at its website [www.disabilityinfo.org](http://www.disabilityinfo.org). The website provides information on state agencies, consultants, physicians and dentists that serve people with disabilities. It also provides a fact sheet library, a directory of multilingual/multicultural services, a disability news feed from national and state news services and links for many other online resources.

Recently, INDEX modified its website to include information and resources on mental health/illness. The website now includes information and links to consumer and family support and advocacy groups, information on specific diagnoses, legal resources, etc. as well as information on new developments in mental health such as Recovery Learning Communities. These listings provide information on specific services, goals, etc. of specific organizations, groups, and state agencies as well contact information and (INDEX), [www.800ageinfo.com](http://www.800ageinfo.com) (Executive Office of Elder Affairs and Mass. Home Care) and related links.

In addition to INDEX, a new information and referral resource is now available on the Executive Office of Health and Human Services website, the Massachusetts Aging and Disabilities Information Locator (MADIL), [mass.gov/madil](http://mass.gov/madil). By using the search features of MADIL, users can find resources on three state-funded aging and disability websites:

[www.disabilityinfo.org](http://www.disabilityinfo.org)

[www.MassAccessHousingRegistry.org](http://www.MassAccessHousingRegistry.org) (Citizens' Housing and Planning Association, or CHAPA).

MADIL also includes Quick Guides to major need areas including a person to talk to, emergency information, employment, energy, finances, food and nutrition, help for people living at home, housing and related services, state agencies and transportation.

*Pamela Mason is the Information and Referral Specialist in the Office of Communications and Consumer Affairs*

## PERSPECTIVES

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**We welcome contributions of articles and photos for PERSPECTIVES.**

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**Please feel free to share PERSPECTIVES electronically.**



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